

SECTION 5. COMMUNICATE

MARKETING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Most likely, you can identify many people who have a vested interest in your organization. Aside from your staff, you also have community partners, financial backers, or even members of the government. All of them want to know how your organization is changing and how well it is succeeding in meeting its strategic goals and objectives. Your organization depends on its stakeholders; keeping them informed is crucial to gaining their support, and ultimately their buy-in, for your strategic plan.

Many organizations are aggressive about letting stakeholders know that they are creating a strategic plan, only to fail later to inform those stakeholders about how well the plan is working. In order to create acceptance of the strategic planning process, it is important to develop and implement a “marketing strategy” that keeps planning team members, key constituencies, and others informed of the plan and its progress. Marketing strategies are not a one-time announcement, they are a continual conversation.

Effective vision and organizational mission statements cannot be forced upon the masses. Rather, they must be set in motion by means of persuasion.

—Donald T. Phillips

WHAT IS IN THIS SECTION?

This section outlines the steps you will need to take to effectively communicate your strategic plan. We discuss:

STEP 1. ASSESSING YOUR STAKEHOLDERS’
INFORMATION NEEDS

STEP 2. CHOOSING AN EFFECTIVE DELIVERY METHOD
FOR COMMUNICATING YOUR STRATEGIC PLAN

STEP 3. CREATING A SIMPLE COMMUNICATION PLAN

STEP 1. ASSESSING YOUR STAKEHOLDERS' INFORMATION NEEDS

As you prepared your strategic plan, you spent time identifying your stakeholders. These stakeholders include anyone your organization regularly deals with—crime victims, service providers, criminal and juvenile justice officials, policy makers, funding groups, and allied professionals. When you market your strategic plan, you will need to target and communicate with each of these groups.

It is easy to take a blanket approach and send all of the groups the same information, but your information will be more effective if you take the time to identify the information that each group wants and needs. For example, crime victims and victim groups will be most interested in elements of your plan that identify improvements to your victim services. Financial backers, on the other hand, may be most interested in how efficiently you are managing your budget.



TOOLS FOR SECTION 5, STEP 1 includes a chart to assist you in listing your stakeholders. It also contains areas for you to assess what information they would like to receive about your strategic plan, and asks you about how concerned the stakeholder is about your plan.

STEP 2. CHOOSING AN EFFECTIVE DELIVERY METHOD FOR COMMUNICATING YOUR STRATEGIC PLAN

Once you have identified your stakeholders and their needs, you need to choose the best method for communicating with them. You have many possible delivery options: from static information, (like newsletters) to dynamic information (like interactive briefings). You can choose from a range of techniques to deliver the message to stakeholders.

Choosing the best delivery method for information about your strategic plan

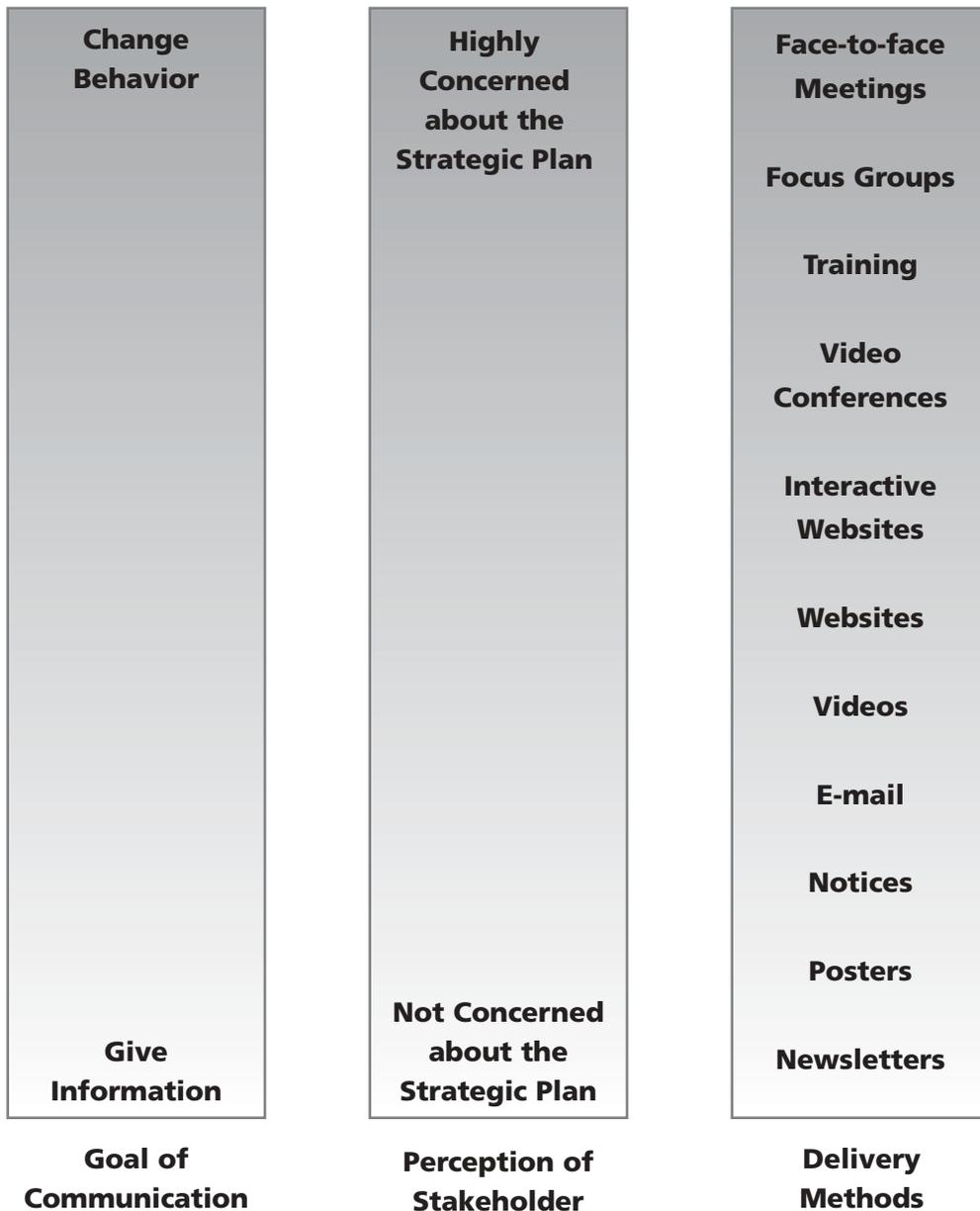
Financial constraints will dictate part of the choice. Some delivery options are much cheaper than others. However, you can use other factors to help you choose the best methods of delivering information to your stakeholders.

The following graphic shows a means of choosing media based on two factors:

1. The goal of the communication.
2. The perception of stakeholders.

The first two columns show the two major factors that you need to consider as you select delivery options. The last column shows possible delivery methods based on those two factors. For example, if your goal is merely to give information, then static delivery methods like newsletters or notices might work just fine. However, if your goal is to change behavior and you know that your stakeholders are anxious about the strategic plan, then you will need to use more interactive methods like briefings, focus groups, or face-to-face meetings. The more concerned your stakeholders are and the more you want to change behavior, the more interactive your communication with them should be.

Stakeholder Information Delivery Range



Highly interactive delivery methods

- Create processes to keep key project team members informed of progress, such as a list serve, updates provided at the beginning of each group meeting, etc.
- Develop training modules that highlight the key components of the strategic plan, as well as its impact on specific constituencies (i.e., 60-minute, 90-minute, and lengthier, detailed modules).

- Prepare briefings for legislators and/or executive branch staff on a regular basis to keep them informed of any progress, allow opportunities for input, and link strategic plan findings to the need for legislative reform (if applicable).
- Conduct presentations about the strategic plan for conferences, coalition meetings, agencies, etc. that reflect its application to the specific audience.

Moderately interactive delivery methods

- Engage the media by distributing press releases about the purpose of the planning process; its goals and objectives; who is involved in the process; and outcomes (including their benefits to victims and the communities in the media’s jurisdiction).
- Hold a press conference to discuss the strategic plan and/or its progress on meeting milestones.
- Conduct periodic audio or video teleconferences to provide status reports about the planning process.
- Develop a web site that provides:
 - An overview of the strategic planning process (including goals, objectives, and project timeline).
 - Information about who is involved and in what capacity (i.e., leadership, advisory councils).
 - Progress reports.
 - Summaries of key findings as they are obtained.
 - Copies of data collection methodologies that can be replicated by local jurisdictions and agencies (such as survey instruments, focus group discussion guides, evaluation tools, performance measures).
 - Links to other web sites that contain information about strategic planning and related victim issues.
 - Capacity to “contact us” with questions.

Less interactive delivery methods

- Project-specific letterhead that includes the mission statement of the overall project.
- Create constituent-specific list serves (i.e., crime victims, victim service providers, legislators, justice officials) and e-mail periodic updates, with opportunities provided for feedback.
- Provide periodic written updates in areas that key stakeholders access regularly, such as:

- Agency or coalition web sites.
- Agency internal “intranets” of staff and volunteers.
- Create a quarterly newsletter that features updates about the strategic planning process.
- Develop a summary brochure that highlights the components of the strategic plan.
- Prepare a detailed summary of the overall strategic plan, as well as an “executive summary” that can be used to inform and educate key stakeholders.



TOOLS FOR SECTION 5, STEP 2 includes a table for you to fill out, which will help you determine what type of delivery method to use with each stakeholder. When you rate the involvement and your goal, you then take the number assigned to that stakeholder and see which types of communication would be best.

STEP 3. CREATING A SIMPLE COMMUNICATION PLAN

Once you have identified your stakeholders and selected some delivery methods to get your message out, then you will need to create a communication plan. Your communication plan simply puts in writing the choices that you have made. It helps you ensure that you stay clear on *when* and *how* feedback will be provided so that you fulfill your commitments in a timely manner.

To create a simple communication plan, you can work with your strategic planning team to fill out a grid. All of the stakeholders that you identified earlier should be represented under on this grid. Sometimes, one delivery method will serve more than one audience. For example, you could send a general newsletter to many of your stakeholders. However, you should try to ensure that you address key stakeholders—and especially those who have major concerns about the strategic plan—with specific, interactive delivery methods that suit their individual needs.



TOOLS FOR SECTION 5, STEP 3 includes a Communication Plan Organizing Grid for you to help determine how to create a simple communication plan. This grid requests you to put your delivery method in the first column, and then has you record who the main stakeholder is, what the main ideas you want to communicate are, what the timeline is, and who is in charge of the effort.



TOOLS FOR SECTION 5: MARKETING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

WHAT IS IN THIS SECTION?

This section contains tools you could use when you are marketing your strategic plan. These tools apply to:

STEP 1. ASSESSING YOUR STAKEHOLDERS' INFORMATION NEEDS

- Stakeholders Needs Table

STEP 2. CHOOSING AN EFFECTIVE DELIVERY METHOD FOR COMMUNICATING YOUR STRATEGIC PLAN

- Delivery Method Determination Table
- Delivery Method Determining Grid

STEP 3. CREATING A SIMPLE COMMUNICATION PLAN

- Communication Plan Organizing Grid

STEP 1. ASSESSING YOUR STAKEHOLDERS' INFORMATION NEEDS

Using a table to identify stakeholder needs

Stakeholder Needs Table

Fill in this table for each of your stakeholders.

Who is the stakeholder?	What information would they like to receive about the strategic plan?	How concerned is this stakeholder about my strategic plan?

STEP 2. CHOOSING AN EFFECTIVE DELIVERY METHOD FOR COMMUNICATING YOUR STRATEGIC PLAN

Creating a table to determine your delivery method

We have provided a table for you to determine which delivery method would be most appropriate to adequately communicate your strategic plan to your stakeholders. You will need to seriously consider each stakeholder's position in your strategic planning process, as you did in the above table, and also establish what your goal is in communicating with this stakeholder. These considerations will help you decide which delivery method to use.

- **Step 1. List stakeholders.** Fill in the stakeholders from your stakeholder needs table in column one.
- **Step 2. Rate stakeholders on involvement in strategic planning process.** Rate each stakeholder on a scale of 1-10 (with 1 being the lowest, and 10 the highest) as to his or her concern in your strategic planning process. For example, if one of your stakeholders has been extremely involved, and very concerned, he or she would receive a score of 10 in column two of the chart. List your answer in column two.
- **Step 3. Rate stakeholders based on your goal of communication.** Rate each stakeholder on a scale of 1-10 (with 1 being the lowest, and 10 the highest) as to your goal in communicating with him or her. For example, if your goal is to simply inform the stakeholder, enter a 1. If, however, your goal is to change the stakeholder's behavior, enter a 10. If your goal is somewhere in the middle, enter a 5 or 6. List your answer in column three.
- **Step 4. Average your ratings.** Add the two numbers together and divide by two to compute the average rating number. Place this in column four.
- **Step 5. Match your final rating to the delivery method.** When you have determined your final, averaged rating score, take that number and find it on the scoring guide below the table. The delivery methods that correspond to your final rating score would be most appropriate for you to use when communicating with this stakeholder. List these in column five.

Delivery Method Determination Table

Fill in the table below to decide how to deliver information to your stakeholders.

Stakeholder	Involvement rating (1-10)	Communication goals rating (1-10)	Average rating score	Appropriate delivery methods

Delivery Method Determining Grid

Match your final averaged number to the corresponding delivery method here. Enter the appropriate delivery methods in column five in the previous table.

Score	Delivery Method
1-2	Posters, newsletters
3-4	Brochures, notices
5-6	Videos, websites, email
7-8	Training, video conferences, interactive websites
9-10	Face-to-face meetings, coaching, focus groups

STEP 3. CREATING A SIMPLE COMMUNICATION PLAN

Communication Plan Organizing Grid

Fill in the grid below to help organize information for your communication plan.

What is the delivery method?	Who is the main stakeholder audience?	What are the main ideas we need to communicate?	What is the timeline for development and delivery?	Who is in charge of this effort?